

VZCZCXRO7310
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHDK #1547 3631638
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 291638Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3529
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS DAKAR 001547

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL AND INR/AA
PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [KTIP](#) [PHUM](#) [SG](#)

SUBJECT: Drug Trafficking Admiral Returns to Guinea-Bissau

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Former Naval chief of staff, Admiral Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto, has returned to Guinea-Bissau. Na Tchuto, widely suspected of being involved in narcotics trafficking and involvement in an attempted assassination of former President Joao Bernardo Vieira, fled from the Gambia where he reportedly was under loose house arrest. A political officer working in the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) told Political Counselor that Na Tchuto has sought refuge at UNOGBIS headquarters and is asking for protection and guarantees for his safety before agreeing to leave the UNOGBIS. The Government is currently negotiating with UNOGBIS regarding how to proceed. According to the Prime Minister's diplomatic counselor, the GOGB would prefer that Na Tchuto be sent into exile into another country. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) According to the UN political officer Richard Freeman, Na Tchuto entered UNOGBIS headquarters in Bissau on December 28 unannounced and without official permission. He then requested protection and assistance in receiving asylum or safety guarantees were he to remain in country. Na Tchuto alleges that he is not safe from Bissau-Guinean military and law enforcement authorities.

¶3. (SBU) Na Tchuto, who is suspected of involvement in the November 2008 attempted assassination and/or coup d'etat against the late former President Joao Bernardo Vieira, says that he is willing to face justice and defend his innocence. However, he argues that he is not safe in Guinea-Bissau, citing the April beating of his attorney, Pedro Infanda, as proof to that effect. (Note: Infanda was apparently beaten by members of the armed forces, ostensibly on orders from the current chief of staff, Admiral Zamora Induta, for publicly criticizing Zamora and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior, characterizing their actions following the March assassination of Vieira as a "coup d'etat." End note.) Joseph Mutaboba, the Representative of the UN Secretary General (RSG) and head of UNOGBIS, is out of the country on vacation. However, he has been in regular contact with the officer-in-charge (OIC) and is overseeing negotiations from afar.

¶4. (SBU) Mario Lopes da Rosa, the prime minister's diplomatic adviser, told PolCouns that the Government is primarily interested in finding a country that would accept Na Tchuto as an exile. Lopes da Rosa said that while it would be best, in theory, for Na Tchuto to be tried by national authorities for his suspected role in the 2008 attempted assassination of Vieira, it is not "realistic." According to Lopes da Rosa, the government of the Gambia was unaware that Na Tchuto was planning to leave the country and has indicated it might be willing to allow Na Tchuto to return. The GOGB will be making an official pronouncement regarding Na Tchuto later today, he said.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Na Tchuto's presence in Guinea-Bissau is inherently destabilizing. Na Tchuto is widely believed to continue to have support among some military personnel, particularly in the

navy. Reportedly, before fleeing to UNOGBIS headquarters, he was able to deny the Armed Forces Chief of Staff Admiral Induta access to a navy facility, ostensibly with the armed support of at least some of the facility's personnel. Moreover, the Government's desire to see Na Tchuto sent into exile, rather than tried, is indicative of the poor state of Guinea-Bissau judicial capacity. The country has no maximum security prison; indeed, there is no prison of any kind in Bissau. Were Na Tchuto to remain in-country, authorities would have no effective means of preventing him from acting to destabilize the government. Conversely, Na Tchuto is correct to allege that he would not necessarily be safe if he were to remain in Guinea-Bissau to stand trial. The military and security forces have been guilty of arbitrary detentions and beatings of people accused of far less than Na Tchuto. One thing is clear - it will be difficult for the Government, already weakened by the absence of newly elected President Malam Bacai Sanha due to illness, to focus on security sector reform or much else while Na Tchuto remains in country. End comment.

Bernicat